

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 21372 271733Z

ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00
NSAE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SP-02 SSC-01 SSM-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4309

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 21372

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDIP, PGOV, EG, GW

SUBJECT: NEW EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER: MOHAMED
IBRAHIM KAAMEL

REFERENCE: CAIRO 22864

1. KAAMEL HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR TO BONN SINCE AUGUST 1973. DURING THAT TIME, AND ESPECIALLY OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE EMBASSY HAS GOTTEN TO KNOW HIM REASONABLY WELL. WE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES IN HOPES THEY MAY BE USEFUL AS CAIRO AND THE DEPARTMENT BEGIN TO ASSESS THE APPOINTMENT.

-- KAAMEL CONSIDERS SADAT TO BE A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND. IN 1946, KAAMEL WAS SENTENCED TO A PRISON TERM FOR WHAT HE CALLS POLITICAL OFFENSES; PART OF HIS TIME IN PRISON WAS SERVED CONCURRENTLY WITH SADAT. THEY HAVE REMAINED CLOSE SINCE THEN.

-- KAAMEL APPEARS TO BE VERY PRO-AMERICAN. HE HAS BEEN QUITE FRIENDLY AND OUTGOING WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 21372 271733Z

OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS. HE SAYS HE HAS A GREAT RESPECT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER. HE HAS SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT'S "STAND" AGAINST THE JEWISH LOBBY IS A TESTIMONY TO HIS POLITICAL COURAGE AND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE REALITIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

-- KAAMEL REGARDS SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE GENEVA

TALKS AS A "NECESSARY EVIL." IN TALKS WITH US, HE HAS OPENLY QUESTIONED WHETHER THE SOVIETS WERE REALLY INTERESTED IN PEACE OR WHETHER THEY WERE MORE INTERESTED IN EXPLOITING INSTABILITY FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

-- KAAMEL SEEMS TO HAVE SOME POSITIVE FEELINGS TOWARDS JEWS IN GENERAL. WHEN HE STOOD TRIAL IN EGYPT (1946) HE WAS DEFENDED BY A JEWISH-EGYPTIAN LAWYER AND, ALTHOUGH HE WAS CONVICTED, HE SAYS IT WAS NOT THE LAWYER'S FAULT. HE REGRETS THAT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN EGYPT HAS SHRUNK SO DRASTICALLY SINCE THEN.

-- KAAMEL'S PREVIOUS POSTINGS INCLUDE MEXICO, CANADA, CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE), AND SWEDEN. HE HELPED ESTABLISH THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN MEXICO CITY AND WAS RE-NAMED AMBASSADOR TO BRAZZAVILLE WHEN RELATIONS WERE RESTORED AFTER A SHORT INTERRUPTION IN THE LATE 1960'S. IN MONTREAL HE WAS CHARGED WITH SETTING UP A CONSULATE FOR THE UAR. WHEN THE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN CONFEDERATION DISSOLVED, THE CONSULATE CLOSED AND HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO OTTAWA (WHICH HE APPARENTLY ENJOYED.)

-- AS A PERSON, KAAMEL IS INVARIABLY PLEASANT AND FORTH-COMING. MILD AND SOFT-SPOKEN, HE IS AN INTELLIGENT AND ABLE PROFESSIONAL. ON THE BASIS OF OUR CONTACTS WITH HIM, WE ARE UNABLE TO JUDGE HOW HE WILL PERFORM IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 21372 271733Z

A TOP-LEVEL POLICY POSITION. THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS WELL-MEANING, SINCERE AND INDUSTRIOUS.

-- KAAMEL AND HIS WIFE RASHIKA WERE VERY ACTIVE WITHIN THE ARAB COMMUNITY IN BONN. HE SEEMS TO ENJOY SOCIAL LIFE AND SAID HIS ONLY REGRET IN BONN IS THE FORCED SEPARATION FROM HIS CHILDREN. THE KAAMELS HAVE TWO CHILDREN, BOTH OF COLLEGE AGE. BOTH ARE IN CAIRO; ONE IS STUDYING ARCHITECTURE AND THE OTHER IS STUDYING EITHER ENGINEERING OR THE ARTS. STOESSEL

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